

Pres. Noble
Condr - Mrs. De Poole (23 yrs.)

Sen. Wasson, Rep. Bridges, Rep. Dobbins, Mayor Culbertson, Mayor Pro. Tom Satterwood

(79-4)

Unit, American

ADDRESS BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) BEFORE LAURENS COUNTY CANCER SOCIETY, CLINTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, APRIL 10, 1959, 7:00 P.M.

Rabbits
Sight life out
Sunt. cit

DRAGNET FOR CANCER

I want to tell you how deeply grateful I am to have this opportunity to address you on a subject so vital to the welfare of our Nation as the problem of cancer.

I realize that my task is not in all respects a pleasant one. Some of the facts are downright terrifying. But I have always maintained that if the people of South Carolina are presented the facts of a problem, they will proceed to solve it.

Your first reaction to this cancer drive is probably very similar to mine, whenever someone comes to ask for money. We want to know what the drive is for. We want to know the merits of the particular plea. We try to line up each demand against conflicting demands on our time and our pocketbook.

In the case of cancer, the answer is simple. There is no need for long drawn-out explanations because we have the facts. Cancer is the number two killer in the United States today. It accounts for more than 250,000 deaths each year. In South Carolina alone 2,124 persons died from cancer in 1956 -- a death rate of 91.2 per 100,000 population. Together with diseases of the heart and blood vessels, cancer accounts for two-thirds of the deaths in this country.

I am appalled by the economic loss to our Nation. It has been estimated that United States industry is deprived of 113,000 man years annually from cancer's toll. The annual cost of hospital care for cancer patients is about 300 million dollars. A conservative cost estimate of the annual loss in services due to cancer lies at about 3 billion dollars.

Sometimes abstract quantities do not relay the full impact of a situation. However, I feel certain there is not a person here today who has not experienced a cold shudder on hearing it said about someone near and dear to him that "They think he has cancer."

Many of us have known sufferers of this dread disease personally. We have seen them change -- sometimes very quickly -- from healthy, vital individuals to pale shadows of their former selves. Who can

measure the years of suffering on the part of the cancer victims or their families? Who can comprehend the fear, the anxiety, the despair? Unfortunately, the danger is not a remote one. Two out of three families are likely to be afflicted by cancer. For an individual the probability that he will develop cancer is one out of five for men and one out of four for women. The chances of dying from cancer are not much smaller -- one out of eight for men and one out of four for women.

In this dim picture there are two rays of hope -- but neither is self-sustaining. The time and financial support of every citizen are urgently needed. The first source of hope is the possibility of recovery from certain types of cancer, if treatment is begun while the disease is in its early stages. The second is the possibility of a solution to the cancer problem, growing out of the constant research in this field.

One major task our contributions will make possible is making others aware of the nature of cancer, its warning signals, and the available treatments. I must admit that I was amazed to discover exactly what takes place in the human body when cancer develops. Like many of you, I was fascinated as a child at the discovery that all of life begins with a single cell. The process of cell-division leading to the 200 billion cells in a newborn baby was a source of wonder to me. I am no less in awe today of the way in which our bodies manufacture new cells to replace worn out ones.

How terrifying it is to see the disruption of this incredible process of nature. Cancer is viewed today as a group of diseases, whose common characteristic is wild cell growth. As I am sure you all know, certain disorderly cell growths in the body are not dangerous. These are the warts, moles and tumors, which appear and disappear in our bodies. But when the growths are termed malignant a person has cancer.

Of course your first question, and my first question, is what causes these growths. This is unfortunately an unsolved problem. A number of irritants are currently suspect, but not one has been fully convicted. The kind of irritation seems to vary from case to case. The possible sources now under investigation, include radiation, certain chemicals, smoking, air pollution, viruses, and in some cases heredity. The urgency of finding a cause or the causes of cancer is incontrovertible. Once this has been isolated, cure may be only a matter of time.

Until that eagerly awaited day, early detection of cancer is our one avenue of hope. Countless victims of this disease have been saved by prompt diagnosis. I am told that this is not always an easy matter. Scarcely a week goes by in some of our larger hospitals without a patient with advanced cancer, who had been cleared in previous examinations, being admitted.

So that each one of us can help in this problem of cancer detection, the American Cancer Society has prepared a check list of danger signals. They are familiar to most of you: Any unusual bleeding or discharge; a lump or thickening in the breast or elsewhere; a sore that does not heal; persistent change in bowel or bladder habits; persistent hoarseness or cough; persistent indigestion or difficulty in swallowing; and a change in a wart or mole. Of course, not one of these means you have cancer. If they persist for any length of time, they are merely an indication that we should see our doctor. Your dollars will be invaluable in keeping these warning signals before the public. The money you raise will also help keep the public informed of the methods of treatment available to cancer victims, and keep them from being misled by false advertisements of cancer remedies.

Unfortunately, the fear and hopelessness long associated with this disease led to unfounded promises of cures and miracle remedies. The problem of the cancer quack is a tremendously dangerous one. Not only have innocent families been robbed of hard-earned savings, but cancer victims have been prevented from obtaining early treatment. So often the problem arises, because common sense has failed persons desperate for help of any kind.

Sometimes the victims of cancer quacks do not really have cancer. They are suffering from quite another problem, but are promised treatment for falsely diagnosed cancer. The cure is most likely successful and exorbitant in cost, but not for cancer.

Perhaps the saddest illustration of the harm that can be done by a quack, is the case of the cancer victims who have little hope of recovery. They are willing to clutch at any straw. The quack may brighten their lives with rosy promises. But larger dangers outweigh this dubious

advantage. He may also hasten their death with unsafe treatments, and may rob the patients and their families of their savings for a futile cause.

Fortunately cancer victims have sources of hope apart from the cancer quack. Fifty years ago a diagnosis of cancer was tantamount to a death sentence. This is no longer true. One in three cancer patients is being saved today. A total of about 800,000 Americans have been cured -- that is they were found to be free of cancer at least five years after diagnosis.

We owe a vote of thanks to the men of medicine and science, whose advances have made possible the two effective methods of cure today -- surgery and radiation. Because of new ways of handling infections, hemorrhage, and shock, and because of new anesthetics and new instruments, surgical operations are performed today which would have been considered impossible a few years ago. Gigantic x-ray machines, atom smashers, atomic isotopes and nuclear reactors, serve as sources of radiation. Sometimes a radium capsule is placed inside the patient at the site of the cancer for specified lengths of time.

Other radioactive materials are used as tracers in the body and may someday be a source of cure. Nevertheless, we must not forget that if one cancer cell is missed by either radiation or surgery, the cure is incomplete and cancer may recur.

That is why your help is so desperately needed to enable the search for a complete cure for cancer to continue. I think the roll-call of new methods of treatment, which are currently being tested, is indeed an impressive one. Scientists have isolated viruses which feed on cancer tissues. They have removed glands to starve cancers which feed on cancer tissues. They have removed glands to starve cancers which depend on hormones. Surgeons have transplanted hearts, lungs and other vital organs, to replace cancerous parts of the body.

Perhaps the most encouraging area of research is in the field of chemotherapy -- that is the use of chemical compounds in the treatment of cancer. By your participation in the cancer program, you will take part in the giant effort of hospitals, universities, research laboratories, industry and government, to come up with safe drugs which will reach and destroy all malignant cells, wherever they may be in the body. More than

70,000 materials have been put through intensive medical testing thus far. About 40,000 substances are being tested each year. Between 400 and 600 of these show enough promise after initial testing to be given further analysis.

You may be interested in knowing a bit about the chain of research which your contributions of time and money put into effect. The search for promising cancer agents begins in universities, government agencies, and private laboratories. Drug and chemical manufacturers then produce substances for testing. The antibiotics, plant extracts, hormones, synthetic chemicals, viruses and vaccines, which they produce, are tested at the Cancer Chemotherapy National Service Center, at Bethesda, Maryland, near Washington, D. C.

The first stage in the testing is conducted on mice with cancers implanted in them. Next, the chemicals which show promise are tested on larger animals. In this way, doses which will be safe for use in humans can be determined. The final and crucial stage in the testing of substances is the result of clinical trials on patients in hospitals. From these trials, a few safe drugs emerge showing signs of usefulness against cancer.

I am sorry to say that no substance has as yet been proven a cure for cancer. I understand that one chemical has destroyed tumors in 15 women with a rare, usually fatal type of cancer. Reports such as this one give us good cause to await news of a breakthrough in the not too distant future.

The facts on cancer have their frightening and their encouraging aspects. On the one hand, we realize how likely it is that we may ourselves be included in the high total of victims from this disease. On the other hand, we are challenged by the opportunity to contribute to the conquest of this enemy which seems so close at hand.

No type of activity is more important in this respect than the cancer drive being launched today. The contributions of communities throughout the country, to the fight against cancer, has been the most powerful weapon in combating this disease. Your hard work and your dedicated effort have accomplished great things in the past, and this year will be no exception, I am sure.

The money you collect and contribute helps make possible the National Research Program. The pamphlets, movies and articles on cancer, are all part of the public education program which you help sustain. Other services to which your contributions go, are the clinics for detection, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer, visiting nurses, and rehabilitation programs. Perhaps one of the most important services from the viewpoint of cancer victims, is the information service provided as a result of your contributions.

You have my strongest backing in your drive this year. I trust that your goal will be met and surpassed. Let us look upon this drive, and all other drives, as a dragnet in the conquest of cancer. We intend to close in on this disease, and conquer it, as we have done with so many other enemy diseases.

GOOD LUCK!

END